THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS HOLDS A DISCUSSION ON REDUCING AMERICAN OIL DEPENDENCY

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WITNESSES:

WINNIE STACHELBERG, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AT CAP

SEN. JEFF MERKLEY, D-ORE.

DANIEL WEISS, SENIOR FELLOW AND DIRECTOR OF CLIMATE STRATEGY AT CAP

JAMES BARRETT, CHIEF ECONOMIST AT THE CLEAN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

SHERRI GOODMAN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GENERAL COUNSEL AND CORPORATE SECRETARY AT CNA

JEROME RINGO, SENIOR EXECUTIVE FOR GLOBAL STRATEGIES AT GREEN PORT

STACHELBERG: Good morning everyone. Welcome to the Center for American Progress. My name is Winnie Stachelberg, and I am the senior vice president here. And I'm thrilled to welcome you to our event today, "America Over A Barrel -- Reducing Our Oil Dependence."

I would like to thank today's guest speaker and our featured panelists for being here today to discuss reducing oil dependence, which would enhance national security, help the economy, and reduce the likelihood of future oil disasters.

The Center for American Progress is thrilled to have with us Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon, a long-time champion of American energy independence.

Elected to the United States Senate in 2008 and with a background as a five-term member of the Oregon Legislative Assembly and speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, Senator Merkley has long campaigned for energy independence for his home state of Oregon and as well for the nation. In fact, as he put it so well himself, it's a choice between a strong, secure, energy independent America, and a weaker, oil-addicted America.

Senator Merkley recognizes the national security, economic, public health, and environmental consequences of our dependence on oil. The transition to a clean energy economy and many clean energy jobs must be spurred

now by taking steps to reduce our dependence on oil, particularly on foreign oil. And there is no better spokesperson for this necessary campaign than Senator Merkley.

This Center has focused on clean energy policies since its inception, particularly clean energy and global warming pollution reductions. Such measures are essential to economic growth and national security issues, as well as environmental quality. Recent successes here from the Center include the House passage of Home Star Energy Efficiency Retrofit legislation as well as the Obama Administration adapting CAP proposals for response to the B.P. oil disaster. These ideas include the establishment of an independent commission to investigate it and the creation of an escrow account to ensure that B.P. promptly pays claims.

Sadly, the B.P. oil disaster is directly related to the day's events. The unfolding disaster is a tragic reminder of the human, economic, public health, and environmental costs of oil dependence. While it certainly helps to have an administration which has demonstrated strong leadership on these issues through rapid response and inter-agency coordination, this is not enough. Nor is trying to clean up an oil or plug the leak enough. Rather, we must transition toward a clean energy economy to get our country off of our dirty, dangerous addiction to oil.

The United States has only 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, yet we use one-quarter of the oil produced annually. One in five barrels of U.S. oil comes from countries that the State Department considers dangerous or unstable, and America sends over $1 billion a day overseas to secure this dangerous, dirty fossil fuel.

Furthermore, growing worldwide demand led by China will put additional upward pressure on oil prices. For all these reasons, America needs to get off oil and get on to the clean energy bandwagon. The United States needs comprehensive clean energy climate reform that would decrease our dependence on this expensive and unstable community.

Senator Merkley is here to tell us not only that we can get off of oil, but how. By outlining the concrete steps needed to get us there, the senator is providing a marker and a pathway toward a clean energy economy.

He will then be followed by today's panel of energy experts who will discuss the connection between oil dependence and our security and economy, and how this year's disastrous spill would impact America for decades to come.

Please join me in welcoming Senator Jeff Merkley here today. Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

MERKLEY: Thank you very much, Winnie, for the introduction and for the support of The Center for American Progress, which is doing so much to advance the conversation about energy policy in our nation.

I am pleased to be here to speak about energy and more specifically about energy independence. Let's start by recognizing that human civilization has gone through a dramatic transition in its use of energy in a very short period of time.

It's only been in the last few thousand years that human society has leveraged the power of both the wind and beasts of burden to augment human power. And then we fast forward to the 1800s and the use of coal, then the 1900s and the use of oil, and then to the current day where we have a host of additional technologies from nuclear and solar and the potential for wave and so forth to bring into the puzzle -- certainly hydropower as well.

So, the practical effects of this have been a powerful change on the way that we structure our society, on the way live. We see it at the personal level in the size of our homes, in the comfort of our homes.

How many people slept with air-conditioning last night? Oh, come on, more than that. Well, I haven't yet turned mine on, but I will be within a couple of nights like the one we had like last night. And we see it in the power of this leveraged energy in terms of the projects we undertake, the physical infrastructure we build, our multi-lane highways and the -- of course, the amazing, beautiful and huge buildings that we build.

But this recent command of energy in all these forms has significant side-effects. And just specifically economic challenges, national security challenges, and certainly pollution problems, from toxins in our air and water to the impact on climate and the acidity of our oceans.

So, our challenge, our collective challenge, and I know that most of you who are involved in this challenge in some way or another, is to manage our use of energy, our production and our use in a much smarter way. And that involves changing habits, reducing waste.

And Winnie mentioned the Home Star Program we are debating now. The Home Star Program and the Building Star Program, how can we change our use of energy in buildings so that we consume a lot less and have this -- the effective benefit of reduced energy cost month after month after months, an investment that keeps on giving. How can we choose our strategies for producing energy so that the effects are less damaging?

And indeed that is the big frame. But when we talk about energy, because it encompasses virtually everything we do as human civilization, it's often such a large topic; it's hard to get your hands around. And it's useful to break it into pieces.

Now, when I was thinking about this, I was thinking about The Oregon Bottle Bill. Now The Oregon Bottle Bill was passed more than three decades ago. And as a young boy scout, I was out picking up trash along the river, and often that trash was bottles and often it was broken bottles. And Oregonians as a whole were unsatisfied that they had all this litter and this broken glass. The Bottle Bill was an energy bill, but it also was a piece of the puzzle that folks can get their hands around, and it had this additional component of being a litter problem.

Well, we need to -- in this vast conversation, we need to look for pieces in which we can connect on multiple points. And our addiction to overseas oil is just one of those points. So, this morning we are going to narrow our lens to that piece.

As Winnie noted, we spend $1 billion a day on imported oil. That's about $3 for every American. I have a family of four. Try to picture yourself writing a check every single day be it to Hugo Chavez or Ahmadinejad or other leaders around the world, taking our dollars, exporting those dollars out of our nation.

Certainly, that has an economic impact. When those dollars leave our nation, they do not stay here and reverberate and pass through our grocery stores and our retail outlets creating jobs here in America.

And much of that oil does not come from Mexico and Canada. It comes from the Persian Gulf or from Venezuela. Approximately 70 percent currently comes from overseas of our imported oil, and projections to 2030 are that 70 percent to 75 percent will continue to come from overseas.

So, this money going to overseas not only affects jobs; it affects our national security in part because dollars end up in the hands of terrorist groups. In part because in order to sustain our access to oil in the Middle East and Venezuela, we have to have a greater projection of forces.

Some estimates have put the cost -- the indirect cost or the additional hidden national security tax for access to Middle East oil -- at the equivalent of $5 per gallon of gas that we consume. That's an enormous hidden tax.

And then of course, burning all that oil has a big impact on carbon pollution, which has a big impact on the health of our planet, and the health of our citizens. So, eliminating our dependence on foreign oil would have many, many benefits.

Well, let's turn to the political equation. Is this doable? Absolutely. And that's part of why I want to talk about it today, because show me a member of Congress who would campaign for office saying we need to increase our dependence on Middle East oil? Who would campaign for office saying we need to increase our oil addiction?

I don't think you would find very many such candidates who would be successful. And also, in addition to being politically feasible, this is a big enough piece of the puzzle to make a real impact.

So, we have a worthwhile policy. We have political feasibility, but what we lack is an -- is a plan to get there. And so, my proposal today is that we adopt such a plan, a 20-year plan to end our dependence on overseas oil. Now, why 20 years? I can tell you, I'd much prefer a 10-year plan. 10 years is something that all of us can identify with.

A normal administration serving eight years can say, "Well, it's something that can be accomplished within our administration plus a year or two. It's easier to get your hands around." But the fact is that pieces of the puzzle take longer periods of time to implement. The transition from gas-powered vehicles to electric vehicles, even traditional mileage improvements in gas-powered vehicles take time for the fleet to change over. Building greater mass transit takes time. So, in order to have a realistic proposal, that is why 20 years.

But if I am going to talk about ending our dependence on foreign oil, why not simply talk about tapping more rapidly into American reserves? Why isn't that an answer? Well, in part because we only have 3 percent of the world's reserves, and we use 25 percent of the world's oil.

If we were to take and aggressively pursue all of the domestic oil that could be found, what we would really be doing is accelerating our long term dependence on foreign oil. It would be increasing our dependence on foreign oil, because we would be using up that small amount of reserves that we have in the United States more quickly.

Furthermore, many folks believe -- many citizens believe that if we were to aggressively pursue drilling, we would lower the cost at the gas pump. But indeed that is not so. If we were to go as quickly, as fast as we could, the best estimates are you have a three cent impact on the price of a gallon of gas. And that is not a very significant impact in the world of $3 and higher gasoline.

And I do want to note that our aggressive pursuit of extreme answers in domestic drilling have been certainly presented dramatically by the Deep Horizon disaster. This disaster -- and I was just down to the Gulf on Friday -- and it really struck me how we stretch the limits in terms of deep-sea drilling.

Not only is it so much harder at that depth to control oil at the source if there is a blow out as we had, but once that blow out occurs, it's so much harder to capture and contain the oil anywhere towards -- close to its source. You can't anchor booms in deep water. And the greater waves in deep water mean oil would wash over the booms anyway. So, then you have to protect the coast line.

What we've seen right now is just the tip of the iceberg, a little tiny bit of that oil slick has reached Louisiana. But if there is a major storm, you are going to see such an environmental disaster along hundreds of miles of America's coast line. So, let's set aside, therefore, drilling as an answer.

The best projections we have for the year 2030 are that our overseas imports -- and by overseas I am referring to imports other than Canada and Mexico -- would be about 7 million barrels per day. So, if we are going to end our addiction to overseas oil, we have to have a projection, a plan in which we generate saving of at least that amount. And what you see here is a plan that is 8.3 million barrels per day to fully address the 7 million barrels per day projected overseas imports with some room to spare.

Because our time is brief, I'll also be brief. But electric vehicle deployment is the largest component of this plan. It could have 3.2 million barrel per day impact.

Tracking -- the truck fuel economy could have a significant impact, two million barrels per day; travel efficiency, both personal and freight and smart traffic management, 1.75 million barrels per day; buildings, 0.2 million barrels per day -- that's a small amount obviously, and I'll explain why in a minute -- alternative such as natural gas and sustainable biofuels, over a million barrels per day; totaling up to 8.3 million.

A couple of points on electric vehicles. I have worked with Senator Dorgan and Senator Alexander for an electric vehicles bill that would work to create deployment communities so we can build the infrastructure at the same time as encouraging the purchase of electric vehicles to demonstrate in different types of environments how

we can proceed to more rapidly deploy those electric vehicles. Another piece of that bill pursues the 500-mile battery. Certainly, that would be a significant factor in greater use of electric vehicles.

And we are on the threshold. Next year, we can anticipate routine choices in terms of the Chevrolet Volt, the Tesla sedan, the Nissan Leaf, a vehicle coming from China. And so there should be four or five options that are present in addition to the current hybrid options.

Truck fuel efficiency -- Cascade Pacific, a non-profit on the west coast is doing everything it can to assist trucking companies in improving their fuel mileage. And they are doing it with very simple things such as air foils, such as automatic tire pressure adjustment, such as energy plans that instead of running the engine to create the energy you need when you are standing still, you run a small generator.

Federal Express is pursuing all electric vehicles built by Navistar. UPS is pursuing hybrid approaches. When you are carrying a lot of weight, regenerative breaking, where you capture the energy as you brake the vehicle, has enormous value.

Buildings play a little part because we are talking here about fuel being burned, and not that many buildings use diesel oil -- heating oil to heat, and so it's a small piece.

I am getting the flag that I am starting to run out of time, so I won't go further into the smart traffic management to note that simple things about how you address parking subsidies or eliminate those subsidies or provide other options, pay-as-you-drive insurance, telecommuting, many approaches that can be implemented.

But to drive a plan, you have to have a body to drive, and that's why I am proposing to National Energy Security Council. This goal would be not only to help design and propose legislation, but to guide and drive implementation.

So, in conclusion, we need to end our addiction to overseas oil. It's smart policy; it's smart politics. It's a choice between clean air future and a dirty air future. It's a choice between creating jobs here in America, or exporting those jobs overseas. It's time to set the goal, and it's time to adopt the plan.

And thank you for the chance to come and talk to you this morning.

STACHELBERG: Great. The Senator has time to take a few questions before he gets on with the rest of his day.

Let me just ask an opening one, Senator Merkley. Thank you so much for being here.

You talk a little bit about the plan and the elements of the plan and the fact that it's politically viable; it should work. And it all seems to make sense I think to most of us in this room.

But can you just talk a little bit more about how it actually can be achieved -- given the politics of Capitol Hill, given who is up and who is down, the B.P. oil disaster, what role that plays -- how can this actually be put into place and implemented?

MERKLEY: Well, one reason that accelerated the work on this proposal -- because we've been working on it for six months or so, but we advanced the timeline -- is because we wanted to insert this conversation into the current debate.

This week a Senate conversation will be about how much to draw from Bingaman's energy bill and how much to draw from Kerry and Lieberman's climate bill and how to combine those, and it's an opportunity right before us at this moment to insert the conversation on overseas independence -- energy independence.

STACHELBERG: Let me open it up. If you would for -- state your name and your affiliation and wait for the mike.

Great, right here up front.

QUESTION: Hi, I have spent the last few years in the marketing of electric vehicles. I will have three observations for you, and we can talk further if you like. One is these are electric vehicles, which I am sure Senator Dorgan has shared with you; they've been on the road for 12 years, for example, a division of Chrysler, which by the way was down-sized in the current deal.

The big issue is consumer adoption. There -- it's not just a function of infrastructure, it's a function of helping people understand that -- make energy visible to people, and there are ways to do that. It's -- yes, it's charging stations, yes, whatever, but it's also mapping services.

I mean I've been in touch with DOE people and people in the administration who handle the technology side, and there really is no facility for mapping the roads where the vehicles that are out now can be used, and there is no system for helping people understand how to make energy visible -- which we can talk about, and I have some ideas for you -- but specifically on the DOE grants, for example, the structure is cumbersome and unrealistic.

There are campuses, for example, that wanted to buy electric vehicles that were prohibited because of the structure of the actual contract requirements. The minimum was too high. The number of parties that had to be involved was too cumbersome. The structure for applying was ridiculous. The shovel-ready part was made -- prohibitive.

Could you please address some ways to realistically give -- provide the funding for facilitating these?

MERKLEY: Thank you very much, and I want to have Jeremiah Balan (ph) lift his hand if he is in here. Where are you at, Jeremiah? Right here. So I am going to connect the two of you, so we can further tap into your experience over the last 10 years.

And indeed part of the reason that Dorgan and Alexander and I are stressing this effort on electric vehicles is believing we have to overcome the types of challenges that you've run into, and that's going to take a coherent conversation and understand those better.

So -- and I want to note that in ways I would like to be able to say to you, well there is a National Energy Security Council that is immersed in planning operational strategies to overcome such hurdles. And so your question really illuminates -- rather than have an answer for you because you've already seen that there isn't a current answer -- is to say it illuminates why we have to have a driving coherent policy force.

STACHELBERG: Boy in the back?

QUESTION: Hi, I am part of the climate project. We had a heavy lift with the health care bill. And I am wondering if the Senate is ready for another heavy lift in terms of putting carbon pricing on -- in energy and to truly address this situation with climate, not only fuel efficiency?

MERKLEY: What we are about to find out is indeed whether the Senate is ready for that. I want to note though that this is a key moment of opportunity because next year may be very different setting.

And so we should not simply say, "Well, we are not quite ready. We are a few votes short. Let's just wait." Because the challenges of the way we consume energy currently, the problems it's creating, are not waiting. And some of those challenges, particularly global warming, is so much harder to address if our next moment of opportunity comes to eight to 10 years from now, if you will.

So, I think we have to seize the moment to have the conversation, to have the votes require people to stand up and declare where they stand, to try to negotiate a plan that will in fact be able to get those 60 votes in the Senate. So, while the jury is out, let's have the debate, let's not set it off because it's inconvenient or difficult.

And I might add that we have got to do something about 60 votes becoming the standard in the Senate. We do not have a constitutional system with a chamber that has a super majority. But we have in effect adopted that through the routine use of the current rules.

The social contract that rarely invokes those rules is gone. That routine use is damaging our ability to function as a democracy. And it's not only affecting legislative branch, because it's affecting the confirmations to the executive branch and the judicial branch, the Senate rule is absolutely compromising all the three branches of our government, and we've got to work to change that.

STACHELBERG: We've got time for one more question -- in the orange, great.

QUESTION: Hi, I am at Strategy International doing a lot of work on sustainable development. Wanted to know how this plan differs from the Pickens plan and if you are working with Pickens in terms of having some kind of bi-partisan support?

He doesn't seem to be very interested in renewable energy per se or the electric car per se, he is more on the sort of national security aspect of the whole thing. But it will be interesting to hear from you how you are working with him and his people on the ground in every state and in Washington because this might be a way to get some kind of bi-partisan support. Thank you.

MERKLEY: Pickens has been very involved in conversations of -- with Senator Kerry and Senator Lieberman, so some of those elements and particularly his interest and emphasis on the use of natural gas -- you notice I refer directly to natural gas a piece of this puzzle -- but he is not involved in other components such as the encouragement on vehicles.

One thing about energy -- energy isn't everything. So as soon as you start to get into this debate, you realize how many contributors there are to the conversation. And Pickens with his -- he has kind of backed off of his big surge of attention, if you will, but he placed some ideas on the table that we need to wrestle with -- increased used of wind power, increased use of natural gas.

I can tell you out in Oregon we -- speaking of, kind of, solving procedural challenges, we just had a huge challenge in terms of expanding wind farms came directly in conflict with the Defense Department's system of Doppler radars for tracking planes that aren't cooperative.

And we had to have a very substantial conversation in a short period of time to resolve that. And yet there it is, wind power very significant, 1,000 jobs for Oregon this summer. We were able to get it resolved.

But you look at the numbers. Wind can be a substantial player. This was about a -- I think it was a 850 sort of say megabyte -- megawatt facility, and a lot of jobs connected to it. So, we -- let's take those best ideas, develop according to the plan. We are going to need executive branch leadership, but we are going to need the Congress to carry and promote this dialogue.

And we do have a moment of opportunity. The world may look very different in 12 months, and that's not -- and I'll just -- I guess I'll close on this. Let's not lose. All of who you are involved in this, let's not lose this moment to make a very significant change towards a smart energy future. Thank you.

STACHELBERG: Senator Merkley, thank you for your leadership on this issue, for being here today. And I hope you'll come back. Thank you.

Senator Merkley is going to leave, but we've got a fabulous panel that is on its way up to the front.

WEISS: Thank you everybody, and thank you for joining us.

And thank you, Senator Merkley, for his great presentation.

If you haven't gotten already, I believe there is copies of his proposal out at the -- in the lobby as -- and you can grab on your way out.

THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS HOLDS A DISCUSSION ON REDUCING AMERICAN OIL DEPENDENCY

I am Dan Weiss. I'm a senior fellow and director of climate strategy here at The Center for American Progress. Thank you again for joining us.

Without further ado, I am going to introduce our speakers. I am going to introduce them all at once, and then they can go -- and I guess we are doing them in alphabetical order: James Barrett, Sherri Goodman, and Jerome Ringo.

In the center is James Barrett. He is the chief economist at the Clean Economy (sic) Development Center. He's had 13 years of experience working on climate, energy, and economics.

Prior to joining the CEDC, he was an independent consultant advising non-profit clients on the economic dimension of various policy proposals. He has also worked at the Economic Policy Institute, and he has worked on the Hill in several capacities. Jim has B.A. in Economics from Bucknell and an M.A. and Ph.D. in economics from the University of Connecticut.

To my immediate right is Sherri Goodman. She is senior vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary of CNA or also known as the Center for Naval Analysis. And she serves as the executive director of the Military Advisory Board for CNA.

From 1993 to 2001, Ms. Goodman was Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Environmental Security, serving as the chief environmental, safety, and occupational health officer for the Department of Defense. She received numerous awards in this capacity. Ms. Goodman received a J.D. cum laude from the Harvard Law School and a master's in public policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She also received her Bachelor of Arts summa cum laude from Amherst College.

Lastly is Jerome Ringo. He is senior executive for global strategies, Green Port. Jerome Ringo came to the Apollo Alliance in 2005 as a dedicated champion of environmental justice and a vocal advocate of clean energy.

Previously, he worked in Louisiana's petrochemical industry, including as production supervisor on offshore oil rigs. He did that for two decades. Much of this time, he was an active union member involved with workplace safety. In 1996, Jerome was selected to serve on the National Wildlife Federation Board of Directors, and in 2005, he became the chair of the Board. In doing so, he also became the first African American to head a major conversation organization.

So without further ado, I am going to turn to each of the panelists for five minutes, starting with Jim, then Sherri, then Jerome.

BARRETT: So, before we get into talking, Sherri will talk about actual defense issues, what I will talk about is economic security issues, and the senator touched on this.

One thing that I think is important for everybody to understand is that while we do buy an enormous amount of oil from what we might call unfriendly countries, our real economic security lies in the fact that we buy oil from an international oil market.

Anybody who thinks that we can drill our way out of this, even if we had enough oil reserves to do that, to meet our own demands, you cannot achieve oil independence unless you simultaneously ban the imports and the exports of all oil even from friendly countries. When oil prices go up, oil companies in Alaska sell oil to Americans at the prices dictated by the global oil market.

And as long as unstable companies have significant influence as they do today on international oil prices, right, the real threat is not that we won't be able to get oil from them, but they will make us pay enough to make it economically infeasible -- unfeasible for us to operate the way we're used to.

Our economy was built -- both the infrastructure and the economic structure was built based on a projection of oil prices at somewhere between $15 to $25 per barrel in perpetuity. We are down to $70 or $69 a barrel this month. If we fell to $50, I think people might dance in the street.

But the era of $20 a barrel oil is over. And if we don't move to a system, an economic system, an infrastructure system that can handle $50 barrel oil, $70 barrel oil, God forbid $100 barrel oil, our economy will cease to thrive.

So, it's not just, to my mind, the issue of stopping this -- stopping sending dollars abroad, but can we remain a major economic player in the global market under $70 barrel oil if we do not change quickly along the lines that Senator Merkley is talking about? The answer is certainly no, and I don't know of an economist out there that would argue this point.

Now, the nice part about all this is that people are already thinking about this. In the center that I work with there are enough people around -- are working furiously at getting private dollars into the market in a way to drive energy efficiency, in a way that makes money, that creates jobs, and that can pivot us around this point now to a sustainable economic future.

Now, this is not going to happen on its own. There is a lot of policy that has to get done at the same time. But I do think it's possible. And I do think there is a way to grow. I look forward to hearing more of the details of this as it comes forward, but I think this bill is probably our best shot in the near term of getting there.

WEISS: Thank you, Jim.

Now, let's turn to Sherri Goodman.

GOODMAN: Great, thank you very much, Dan, and thank you to The Center for American Progress.

If there is one message I want to leave you with today, it's that the U.S. Military as the nation's single largest energy consumer -- user today can also be a leader in moving us towards a clean energy economy. There are important historical precedents for the military's cultural leadership in our nation.

And as Senator Merkley noted, the challenge we face in moving to a clean energy economy is not one just of technology -- although technology is indeed critically important -- but it's also one of consumer practice -- as one of the questioners noted -- and of people willing to be able to change behavior.

Let's start first with the threat. I've been working with a group of senior retired military leaders for the last couple of years, and I've been in the national security field for over 20 years in the Department of Defense on the Senate Armed Services Committee staff. And it's very, very clear in the national security community that our dependence on fossil fuels is indeed a national security threat.

It drives instability in fragile regions of the world. It's putting our military at risk today in Afghanistan and Iraq as we convoy fuel to the front. In fact, 70 percent of the tonnage that our military takes to the front is indeed fuel and water. And the Commandant of the Marine Corps is so concerned about this has made it a major priority of his to reduce the dependence of Marines' reliance on fuel and water and expeditionary foreign operating bases.

Now, he is all for the environmental benefits that come with it, but he is doing it primarily in order to reduce the risk he is putting Marines to and to reduce the cost of deploying our troops to protect our national interests.

So, this has become critically important to our national security, both for our military when we operate overseas and also when we operate and train here at home. You know we also face a very fragile and outdated electrical grid in this country. And many of you have probably experienced it whether you had the black out in the east here a few years ago, or whether you've been faced with it in other walks of your own life.

But we have outdated infrastructure in this country, and the electrical grid, for one, really needs to be updated. Our military -- many critical military mission have become overly dependent on that and reducing that vulnerability has become an important part now of our national defense.

The military is already beginning to change its practices substantially, everything from putting on foam-insulating tents instead of using major electrical -- big electrical generators in Iraq to buying 4,000 neighborhood electrical vehicles in the Army where it can use little carts to do a lot of small traffic in and around military installations.

And the military in many ways is a microcosm of society. Military installations are like small cities. They have many of the same challenges and problems that our cities do today both in terms of transportation and consumer behavior.

So, as we go about changing the way we work and use energy in the United States, the U.S. Military can be an early leader, a technological innovator and a test bed for new technologies. When I was in the Department of Defense in the 90s, we created some programs to help advance development of environmental technologies that were much needed at that time to deal with cleanup of Superfund and hazardous waste sites.

And we created some specific environmental technology programs in order to advance not only the technology, but the adoption of the technology and the approval of it by regulators and enabling local communities to uptake that technology.

The same is true although the regulatory regime of course is a little bit different, but the same is very true today. There are barriers both in federal programs as Senator Merkley noted, the conflict that is occurring right now in Oregon between a wind farm that will bring jobs to his state and new energy close to an Air Force installation, where there -- where the military needs the use of radar.

Those challenges cry out for a proactive approach today to looking to better land-use planning, better national planning, and local planning to enable these challenges to be seen early and resolved. They are eminently resolvable as long as we are looking ahead and looking holistically at what the goal is.

And the goal is to lead our nation into a clean energy economy. The military historically has been part of leading energy developments in our nation, whether it's from steam power for ships to coal to oil. It has been at the -- to nuclear power -- it has been in the forefront in adopting all of those new technologies.

And I have every reason to believe it will be so again, and it will be in America's national interest to do so. Thank you.

WEISS: Thank you, Sherri.

Now, I will turn it over to Jerome Ringo.

RINGO: Thank you very much. And I want to thank you, Dan, and The Center for American Progress and the senator.

Today is not a good day. Today is not a good day for me, for my fellow citizens of Louisiana. Today is not a good day with respect to energy for America. Where today we continue to import 70 percent of our fossil fuel energy from -- and energy resources from other countries, we still have a 9-plus percentage of unemployment, double digit in some states.

We still continue to lose American manufacturing. Today, we still import 70 percent of the components that we need for wind turbines, 80 percent of the components that we need for solar panels and photovoltaic materials, which, by the way, was invented in America.

Still today not one transformer on our grid system is made in America. And today, this very minute, I live in ground zero where we are hemorrhaging oil into our Gulf of Mexico. Today is not a good day because we are dealing with an environmental and social disaster that will mean decades of suffering.

And it's not as though this is new to us. We have been screaming for policies to be put in place to protect us for years. And now the worst case scenario has happened.

We are now faced with destruction of the heart of the central flyway for migratory birds and the destruction of nesting -- sensitive nesting areas of the Gulf of -- along the Gulf of Mexico. Forty percent of the nation's seafood comes from that region.

We are now faced with people that are down on the coast who are playing politics with American lives. We've got a governor down there who is really interested in stopping an oil leak, but seems to be more interested in running for president. And we have people in Louisiana right now who are totally frustrated and are in fear as a result of beginning of hurricane season as of June 1.

What must we do? In the short term, we must stop the leak, clean the beaches, which will take decades, and we must come up with policies now that are going to guarantee safe operation in the oil and gas industry.

But in the long term, we must diversify our energy portfolio to where we are not so one-dimensional with respect to our energy and to our energy needs. We are addicted to oil. We are as a junkie. And the drug dealer are countries who are not our friends and oil companies who operate strictly in the name of -- of profit.

So we are not in a good place. And America needs to be put on a 12-step program. We need to be put on a program that is going to meet our immediate needs, and as in the chemical addiction program, the first step is to admit that you have a problem.

Whether we are willing to admit it or not, that oil spill has put it right before our eyes that, yes, we have a problem. And we've got to fix it.

We've got to fix it through policies that are going to mandate safe operation, with policies that are going to promote investment into research and development of our alternative energy and into education so that the American people can see the value of green, can see the value of alternative energy, and so that we are not as one- dimensional as we have been.

I recognize T. Boone Pickens plan as I've met with Mr. Pickens and his idea of increase of natural gas as a bridge fuel to wind energy. And I have no problem with bridge fuels, but I really promote the idea that why don't we put as much money into R&D of those new alternatives so we can accelerate the process of hybrid cars, the processes of promoting wind and solar, and biofuels.

We put man on the moon in the 60s. We can fix this problem. We need not continue to wait until there is a catastrophic disaster.

If a hurricane hits the coast, and climatologists have predicted that it will happen, and it will be an intense hurricane season. The worse is yet to come. Yes, we see oil in the marshes, but our greatest fear in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and even Georgia and the Carolinas, is that we will begin to see contamination blown inland, and it will have an effect, a ripple effect that America will feel it to the bone. We will feel it in our pockets. And it would change our lives in a way that we've never seen before.

So this is very critical time -- a very critical time for those on Capitol Hill, to the citizens that live on the coast of Louisiana, to people all over this country and throughout the world to respond. This is a game changer. And we've got to be a part of the game. We've got to be a part of the change. And I challenge all of you to do just that. Thank you.

WEISS: Thank you very much all the panelists.

THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS HOLDS A DISCUSSION ON REDUCING AMERICAN OIL DEPENDENCY

What we are going to do now is we are going to have a discussion among the four of us for about 20 minutes, and then we will take questions from the audience for about 15.

And I would like to start off by asking each of -- all of you and just speak up, politely of course, what did you think of Senator Merkley's speech?

Do you believe his proposals were adequate to address the problem? Are they politically viable in your view? And are there other politically viable proposals that ought to be included in any oil reform policy that are not in his outline that he described today?

So, now I would like to open it up to each and all of you.

BARRETT: I'd be happy to go first. As always with these things, the devil is in the details.

And from what I've seen, I like it -- a lot of how we get exact from here to there is going to have to left to people as brilliant as our politicians are or they are going to have to left to people who know even more about how we get more efficient vehicles out there in case of moving to natural gas or other bridge fuels to know about which ones are the safest, which ones are the most effective, how do we get to (inaudible).

But there is absolutely no question in my mind that for us to succeed as a nation, this is exactly where we have to go. We have to move massive amounts of private capital, public capital, elbow grease and policy into clean energy markets as quickly as we can, or we will start to fall behind.

RINGO: I completely agree with the senator, and I think the senator's plan is a good plan. We have lived through decades of what I call missed opportunity. And now we are in a decade of last opportunity.

And I believe that the senator's plan is a great step in the -- in a forward direction to initiate policies that will start changing how we produce and consume our energy, and it's the right step to take. And I am really pleased that the senator in his efforts in his home state of Oregon where they simply don't talk the talk, but they walk the walk. And I am pleased that he is now promoting that beyond Oregon throughout this country. So it's a great step.

WEISS: Sherri?

GOODMAN: Several years ago, a Marine four star who now commands the Joint Forces Command, General Jim Mattis, said, "Free us from the tether of oil." And that is indeed true. He said it with respect to U.S. military dependence on fuels for military operations, but it is of course true here.

Senator Merkley's plan, which of course draws on his own personal experience in Oregon, which has been a part of the country that has been a leader in sort of positive behavioral, social change on behalf of the society from smart growth and sustainability movements reaching back 20 years, I think draws on a rich wealth of experience in that part of the country.

But -- and exists in other parts of our nation too. And I think that's what we are going to have to call upon. That's what I see in our military when I work them, is the willingness to change, the willingness to be part of the solution and to help drive that on behalf of the American people.

WEISS: Thanks. And just a reminder that there are copies of America Over a Barrel outside. Is that going to be on your website, Jeremiah (ph)? It's going to be on Senator Merkley's website, which is just, Google Senator Jeff Merkley.

In addition, The Center for American Progress has written about a number of these questions, particularly natural gas vehicles, particularly trucks, and we've also got sort of a compendium of proposals in an article that John Podesta (ph) and I co-authored a couple of weeks ago whose name escapes me.

But go to our home page at americanprogress.org and there is lots of information and factoids about many of the proposals that Senator Merkley made today.

So, now we are having a little bit more of a broader discussion. I am going to have each of the panelists a question aimed at them. But the other panelists, you should feel free to contribute as well.

Again, going in alphabetical order, we are going to start with Jim. What are the economic costs of our status quo oil consumption pattern and oil use policies? And are there any economic benefits to the status quo? Are we going to be giving up anything if we change the way we do business?

BARRETT: Vast quantities of cheap energy are phenomenal development strategies. It served us incredibly well for the last -- let's just call it 100 years, roughly speaking. So, if you are willing for a moment at least to ignore the environmental issues and the defense issues with all due respect, it would be fantastic if we continue to do that, but the simple fact is that we can't, right?

So the question is not how much is it going to cost us to get off of oil. It's how much are we going to lose if we stay on it is the issue that everybody has to confront at this moment.

Yes, there is something else, some fascinating research out there -- economic research I've been working at. And it seems very intuitive that if we are going to use less oil that our economy has to suffer, but some of the folks who really know their economic chops, take a look at this stuff and they realize if -- it's sort of a simple idea once it's pointed out to you.

Nobody really actually consumes oil economically, anyway. We consume transportation services, and your car really doesn't care. And we have to get to a point where we really don't care what we consume to get from point A to point B.

The problem of course is at the moment, we live where we live, we work where we work, we drive what we drive. None of that can change overnight. This is the infrastructure I am talking about that was built on $20 a barrel oil.

So, if we want to continue to pretend that we are paying $20 a barrel of oil when we are actually paying $70, that's great. But the rest of the world is not going to wait for us. They are not going -- you know, they are not going to slowdown the great economic race that we are running right now. We have to catch up, and it starts with investing in the new technologies and new infrastructure that meet the real world that we're looking at going forward.

WEISS: Thank you.

Jerome or Sherri, anything to add to that?

If not, let's not go on to Sherri Goodman. Why should the Department of Defense invest in clean energy? And what policies should we be pursuing to speed that effort along or enhance that effort in some fashion?

GOODMAN: Thank you, Dan.

Well, as I mentioned, DOD is the nation's single largest energy user, it's the largest consumer of energy in the federal government. And it's so -- it's in its own interest because of the reasons I've mentioned. The over reliance on fuel puts our troops at risk, put our missions at risk in terms of a dangerous and fragile electrical grid, to move to new sources of energy.

And at the same time, the military has a long tradition -- I see many -- those of you here in the room who've worked with me on these issues over the years, of being a leader in moving both to new technologies and new behavioral practices whether it's new technologies we are talking about or whether it's a whole cultural and

behavioral change from the military in the 50s having been one of the first part of -- first organizations in the United States that fully integrated racially, changing long-held patterns of behavior.

We are talking in many ways about consumer habits as well as about advanced technologies here. So it's really in many ways a combination of both. You can't have one without the other.

So, how does -- how do you do that? Well, there are some benefits of having a command and control organization. Usually in the military, when an order is given, it's followed. And so the president has issued an executive order now to the federal government to show specific -- meet specific goals in reducing energy intensity and managing and measuring energy.

The first thing is you can't -- you have to measure it. You can't manage what you don't measure. All of you in business here in this room know that, OK. But for many years we as a society haven't really managed -- measured how we use our energy. So we don't what we are -- we don't know what we are using, and it's hard to change our practices.

All of you who are parents out here know how hard it is to get -- wean your kids off things with high fructose corn syrup in it. You are looking, you say, oh, yes, I don't want to serve them that anymore, and then the next thing you know they are eating an Oreo, right. So, you know -- and it really takes concerted effort to change habits even when you are well-intentioned because of practices that have built up over many years.

So we have to be willing and want to sort of -- to change. And that -- and so that's a combination of behavior and of technology and be willing to sort of take on the hard problems. And you know, nothing is more poignant today than the devastation and the tragedy that we see in the Gulf.

I couldn't agree with Jerome more. We -- you know, I also hail from a coastal region in a different part of the country, and I think everyday what would be happening if the beaches that are on Cape Cod and close to where my family lives, if they were being fouled now. And all of you can probably feel that even if you are not from the Gulf. And so we need to harness the tragedy and take -- and use it change our society for better.

WEISS: Thanks. And that leads really well into Jerome, which is you are down in Louisiana. Has the media reflected the true scope of the B.P. oil disaster? And if not, why not? And what isn't being shown that people ought to know about?

RINGO: The answer to your question is, no, they have not shown the true scope of the disaster. It is somewhat similar to 2005 when you witnessed on CNN and the national networks the impacts of Hurricane Katrina on the Lower Ninth Ward. You saw people wading in water up to their necks and you saw the bodies in front of the Super Dome.

Well, there was much that you did not see. You did not see the tombs that were plucked out of the cemeteries that were washed offshore when the storm receded. I've got a cousin's body who was never found from the cemetery. Those are the things you don't see.

What you don't see in this oil spill is the ripple effect. Those people that work in the hotels that are losing jobs because of the cancellations on Pensacola Beach and Destin. Those people that shovel shrimp and transfer oysters from one building to another now lose their jobs because the fisheries are closed. Those truck drivers who will lose their jobs because there are no seafood loads for them to move from one place to another.

The residual impact, the ripple impact -- the fact that Louisiana is known as the sportsman's paradise. Hunting is a billion dollar industry down there. The ducks don't come because of the contamination or when they come they die, so the hunters don't come, so their money don't come. And Louisiana loses a huge amount of money from its hunting industry.

And at the same time, we now have a moratorium on drilling, new drilling, which is very necessary, but there are oil workers who now can't go to work because of the spill that was a result of B.P. This problem is bigger than what you see on TV. This is not just B.P.'s problem.

This is a problem of policy that was not put in place years ago to guarantee safe drilling. When you are drilling in a mile of water, there is no margin for error. If you have a pen hole leak, it can be catastrophic if you can't fix it. And so now you have a company that has drilled, that did not have a plan in the event of a disaster, and now you see the result.

So the ripple effect is so far-reaching, far beyond the camera, far beyond the media, of things that you don't see and for many -- in many respects may never see. But you too across this country will feel the effect as you felt the effect of one-third of our domestic oil supply being shut down during Hurricane Katrina, you saw the result at the gas pump.

Now, you will begin to see the result of the moratorium, shut down on new drilling. But also, I hope that it puts into the spirit of the American people to reactivate activism in this country. To reactivate a spirit of action to where we now push for the policies that will protect us, but also push for the policies that will promote investment into research and development of new alternative energies, promote education, and help us move into this new green world that we ought to be living in to reduce the impacts that we are experiencing today.

WEISS: Thank you. And actually that -- your comments about what we are seeing in the Gulf leads me into our bonus round of questions, which is I would like each of you -- as you know tomorrow evening President Obama is going to be giving his first Oval Office speech to the nation about the B.P. oil disaster and the short term and long term implications of that.

If you were to advise the president, what would you urge him to talk about tomorrow evening? This is a lightening round, by the way.

So just -- why don't we start with you, Jim?

BARRETT: All right. In 1987, the Car of the Year was the Honda CRX; it got 50 miles to the gallon. It's an internal combustion engine. You go outside, you get the little smart cars, the cute little things on street, 41 miles to the gallon. The Prius is rated at 50 miles to the gallon. In 13 years, we have made roughly zero progress -- is that 13?

WEISS: That is 23 years.

BARRETT: 23 years. Now I feel really old, no. I am just...

WEISS: Just theoretical.

BARRETT: I am just wishing I was 31 instead of 41. Right, so, yes, my (inaudible). So where have we gone in 23 years? Our cup holders per capita? Through the roof, OK. Miles per gallon? Flat line. You cannot tell me that we can't make cars as efficient as they were nearly a quarter of a century ago, when I was in high school.

WEISS: So, you want him to talk about that?

BARRETT: Yes, ingenuity or investment, I mean it's -- policy is great, it drives investment, it drives where we need to go, right. We can do it if we have to, if we put our minds to it. Last 25 years we have been walking the desert swimming in cheap oil.

WEISS: Sherri, you actually advised a previous president. What would you advise President Obama to talk about tomorrow evening?

GOODMAN: Well, that's an awfully tall order, so I want to be very modest here, but you know I -- as I have said, I think we can use the -- we can -- we must use the tragedy to usher in a new era of energy innovation and environmental protection.

It can be an era when protecting our land or water and our air are essential components of protecting our people who depend on our natural resources. And it's an era when our national security and environmental stewardship are recognized as mutually supportive goals. It's an era when American ingenuity and innovation enable us to meet those goals and reclaim our global leadership and our economic strength.

WEISS: Jerome, what would you advise the president to talk about tomorrow night?

RINGO: I do want to say that being from Louisiana and unlike many in Louisiana, the president has done a great job in response to this oil spill. The president has been there, and he is there now as we speak.

Mr. President, we need an energy bill now. Mr. President, we need to take the lead on reducing CO2 to the atmosphere now. We make up 5 percent of the world's population. We use 25 percent of the energy in the world. And we discharge 35 percent of the CO2 to the atmosphere.

We must take the lead. We must lead by example. We cannot let our action in this country be determined by the inaction of other countries.

We must hold big oil accountable. Forget about their lobbyists on Capitol Hill and how much money they invest into this project or that project, the bottom line is oil is leaking in the Gulf of Mexico and big oil is responsible.

There has to be a level of accountability that is not just a slap on a hand, but make big oil pay for the cleanup, make big oil pay for restoring that coast line, which they have helped destroy, and make big oil invest in research and development with their huge quarterly profits.

ExxonMobil makes $1,200 a second. There is no reason why these companies can't invest in rebuilding the economy of America. And the president has a place and a responsibility to help them hold a level of accountability and move forward in the proper direction.

WEISS: That's excellent advice. I hope that -- unfortunately, I don't believe he is listening right now because he is actually in the Gulf.

RINGO: That's right.

WEISS: Interesting enough, last year, The Center for American Progress released a report called "Big Oil Misers" that found that on average the big five oil companies of B.P., Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, and Shell invested an average of 1.7 percent of their annual profits in research and development of alternative energy sources. So, your last suggestion is a very, very important one.

Now, I would like to turn it over to our questions. Please raise your hand, wait for the mike, I will call on you. When you get called on, please give your name and affiliation.

And the young lady here in the brown and white printed shirt or whatever it is, skirt, dress.

QUESTION: Thank you.

WEISS: I am not a fashion guy, sorry.

QUESTION: So, of course, I see that we have a need for a national plan and support my Senator's recommended a plan. But all of the panelists -- and thank you very much, excellent panel -- have commented on education and the cultural shift that's going to be required.

As a young professor myself back at the 70s, a colleague and I did some research on really the question of why consumers -- why people don't change their clothing practice so that they could lower the thermostat in the winter or raise it in the summer in interior environments. So, in my view, there was such an important role for education.

And what I am hoping the panel or the senator's staff might suggest is that in addition to the secretaries of education, transportation, and commerce, and defense on the proposed national council on energy security, the secretary for education be added. We all know, education is the key to building our intellectual capacity in this country address all of these extremely complex problems.

WEISS: Thank you.

QUESTION: So, it's not a question, it's a suggestion.

WEISS: What do folks on the panel think of that suggestion?

GOODMAN: I think -- I agree with you that education is vitally important. The military places a lot of emphasis on education of its -- both it's enlisted and its officers, something that can be used very -- is a very useful tool now and in expanding energy education. And it can be used as broader implications.

The need to grow and invest more in our young people in science and engineering is vitally important for our national strength and national -- and our continued global leadership. So educational institutions that promote science and education -- and math for young people throughout our educational system and through graduate programs, I think is very important. And you know, the military draws heavily on those talents. So I believe that's -- I believe that's important.

And I think we need increasingly to see that as something that we do comprehensively across the government in terms of investing in the education and training of all of those in public service. We've done a very good job in our military. But we have an opportunity and a need to do that across the board.

RINGO: As well on the education piece, very quickly, we in our generation, though we are fighting for the policies and the changes that will sort of be the game-changer with respect to energy, energy use, energy policy, will not see the benefit of what we are fighting for in our generation. It's for our children and those generations that are yet unborn.

We've really got to put a lot of emphasis on educating K through 12, really emphasis on educating the young people. I was the chairman of National Wildlife Federation; we really were interested in promoting education. Kids are disconnected from nature. We call it nature versus the Nintendo.

And kids are just so disconnected that those that are going to be the advocates and the leaders of that next generation are disconnected right now. So we've got to educate at all levels on the value or green and why it's important and how it is important that they be involved.

WEISS: There is no question that Ranger Rick who is NWF's spokesperson to young people is a value -- performs valuable service.

This gentleman over here, wait for the mike please, and then identify yourself and your affiliation.

QUESTION: Thanks, Dan. I am senior director for renewable energy at the Defenders of Wildlife.

And Sherri, I thought you made an important point about the need to link national security and environmental stewardship. And as we shift gears and hopefully accelerate our commitment to renewable, solar, and wind, geothermal, so my question is how do we ensure that we don't repeat the mistakes that are being made with regard to offshore oil development in the Gulf?

Here we have seen the dramatic impact, huge wildlife implications. While the impacts of the deployment of renewables on shore may not be as dramatic, they hold great potential for impacting wildlife habitat, for impacting water and water use and access, and they could have long term dramatic implications.

So how do we being to learn from past lessons and plan ahead so that when we deploy renewables and hopefully accelerate that process, we do it the right way in an environmentally sound way?

WEISS: It's for any of the panelist I presume?

GOODMAN: Well, I think -- I do think it's important to integrate the full range of considerations into our national planning efforts. Speaking -- but that would go to state and local efforts -- speaking for a moment just about national security, Jim, where you and I have -- our pasts have been linked in the past.

In the last couple of years, as I mentioned, I have been working with a group of military leaders on climate change, energy security, and national security. In our first report in 2007 on national security and the threat of climate change, we called for integrating the national security considerations of climate change into national defense planning documents.

And now this year we have the first Department of Defense quadrennial defense review, which is DOD's major planning document that has a whole section on energy and climate change. And that is important in driving change throughout our whole national security planning process.

And you see that reflected in other -- in the intelligence community now and in other -- the president's national security strategy and national military strategy.

I think the next step beyond this is to begin to understand the -- not only the climate and energy impacts, but water and natural resource impacts from a national security perspective. We've begun to think about that, but there is a lot more that needs to be understood and assessed and integrated into planning efforts at the federal, state, and local level so that we can understand those impacts and plan for them in advance.

BARRETT: My response would be make sure we do, you know, first things first, right. Since the late 1970s, roughly two-thirds of our energy demand has been met not by energy, but by energy efficiency, right. And that is with roughly zero concerted national effort to get that done.

Electricity costs 10 to 12 cents a kilowatt hour; energy efficiency costs 4. Why aren't we deploying energy efficiency in every home, every building, and every car and every factory, right? This is where we need to go.

Renewables are going to play a role. And there are some real issues; I am familiar with them. But why not minimize the need for renewables? Not that we don't love them, but let's minimize the need for all energy, right? A way to accelerate our economy at the same time we avoid all the negative side effects of all forms. I don't think there is any form of energy out there that doesn't have some problem with it that we would like to avoid.

RINGO: That is so well said, and any form of addiction is not good. And because now we have our drug of choice as oil, hopefully we can get off of that. But efficiency and conservation eliminates our dependency solely on any form of energy because I believe that there are adverse consequences to almost any form.

I mean, folks say, "Well, let's put up wind turbines," but there are folks that challenge the location of wind turbines and what have you. So, efficiency and conservation, I fully support that.

WEISS:. Thank you. We are moving to our lightening round of questions here. Let's keep them very brief.

The young lady in the lilac blouse over there and wait for the microphone.

BARRETT: Who says you don't know fashion?

RINGO: You know fashion man.

WEISS: I know colors.

(LAUGHTER)

QUESTION: I am with the Naval Postgraduate School. I think this has been a terrific and informative session.

I got into energy back in '05 or actually in '04 because Jim Ossi (ph), my boss at the Navy, had said it was the number one issue he would have dealt with if he were elected in '04. And I set up a salon at my office, and Sherri was even a part of it, and out of that group we got a line into the president's State of the Union -- the nation has a problem; we are addicted to oil.

And I then got money from Defense to set up something called the Energy Conversation, which was aimed primarily at the Defense Department. And I will tell you, back then they were not interested in any of this stuff, but they have surely moved.

Two point I want to make -- one is human change is not like technical change. It generally takes one to two generations, and we are very impatient, and we want things to happen with (inaudible) laws every three months. That doesn't happen.

I think you have to have a bumper sticker that everyone hears. The one we were using was, "Be energy smart. Are you doing your part?" But the question is how do you get the nation, every individual, to feel he or she has a responsibility. You need to have leadership that says that.

WEISS: In the form of a question please?

QUESTION: My question is how do you -- who do you get to design the stories that get the nation to want to follow, because story- telling is a very important part of this?

WEISS: Great point, thank you. Panelists, quickly, so we have time for one more.

BARRETT: I will speak only as a father and an expert, but children, right. There is a reason why they advertise sugar-loaded cereal during cartoons and not during the news hour. If you put programs into schools -- I've made my 10-year old daughter our Chief Energy Officer. Their school went to this thing, they cut their cafeteria waste by 85 percent in one month because they started measuring, right. Get to the kids, and you'll change the rest of us eventually.

WEISS: OK, you also like to add anything to that?

RINGO: Jobs, jobs, jobs.

(LAUGHTER)

WEISS: OK. That was really lightening. Our last question, let's see here.

That woman who just bent half way over and almost fell over her chair.

QUESTION: I am from China. I am an evangelist working (inaudible). Thanks for this opportunity to be here.

I have one comment actually, which is about what you mentioned renewable is important, energy efficiency is important, I want to measure energy saving. Look in here, outside it's so hot, but here it's so cold. So look at every buildings. It's all -- it's like this -- I was first time in U.S. in Washington, D.C., in 1999. Now after 11 years, I am here again. It's same.

As you just mentioned, 20 years past the efficiency of car is nearly the same. What we have done to energy saving from buildings? It could be a small change of behavior as we all mentioned. And in China, we also try to do so. We said, OK, in the summer only 26 degree summer in building. This is Asian study by (inaudible) oh yes, sorry, this is Chinese 26...

WEISS: Degree centigrade, yes we got it.

QUESTION: ... in centigrades. But I don't mean -- this enough for Asia, but it didn't work well. But also I think in terms -- in America we mentioned if there is good leadership policies, I wish after five years if I come back again in Washington, D.C., I feel comfortable temperature indoor in summer.

WEISS: Thank you. Well, using the prerogative of the moderator, I would first advocate for shedding coats and ties for men during the summer months.

Are there other comments from the panelists? If not, I want to thank you all for coming. I greatly appreciate the great comments from all the panelists. I want to thank the audience.

Remember to check out Senator Merkley's plan at his website, and go to americanprogress.org where we've written about many of these energy issues.

END

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